
OFFICE OF QUALITY PROFESSIONALS AND SPECIAL SCHOOLS
Summary of State Board of Education Agenda Items
June 21-22, 2007

EDUCATOR LICENSURE

28. Approval to begin the Administrative Procedures Act Process: To Amend the Passing Score for the School Leadership Licensure Assessment (SLLA) Exam as Recommended by the Commission on Teacher and Administrator Education, Certification and Licensure Development

Specifications:

On May 4, 2007, the Certification Commission voted to raise the cut score for the School Leadership Licensure Assessment (SLLA) exam from 154 to 165.

Background:

The SLLA is based on Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) standards. It is designed to measure whether entry-level principals and other school leaders have the relevant knowledge believed necessary for competent professional practice. (ETS 2005)

The SLLA test is a six hour test consisting of three two hour modules. The first module contains two separate one-hour sections. Both of these sections are formatted in vignettes that require the test taker to answer with specific detail and then give a rationale for the answer when appropriate. Section I covers the content areas such as due processes, exceptional education, safety, facilities, budget, discipline, technology, and scheduling. Section II requires the test taker to balance the budget, address instructional and curriculum issues, relate strategies used in response to a given situation, and discuss the instructional implications. (ETS 2005)

The second module consists of two separate two-hour sessions. The first session involves content that requires synthesis of information and problem solving as the test taker reacts to case studies. The second session covers document analysis in which the test taker uses his/her results to utilize decision making skills. (ETS 2005)

Rationale:

A panel of certified Administrators and Educational Leadership personnel met on March 20, 2007, to evaluate the currently approved passing score for the School Leadership Licensure Assessment test (SLLA) that is required for Administrators to be certified. The current passing score of 154 has allowed 98% of all test takers to pass. The average score made by most Mississippi SLLA test takers is much higher, whether traditional or alternate route. When looking at the scores of the same test takers grouping by gender and ethnicity all SLLA test takers during this same time period had a median score range from 173 to 180. The panel is recommending that the Commission raise the passing score on the SLLA to 165. For the testing period of September 1, 2005 - August 31, 2006, a cut score of 165 would have resulted in 86.3% of Mississippi test takers passing the SLLA.

This test is only given in the months of January, September, and June of each year. The next available date for an individual to take this test is June 09, 2007. If the new score is approved, this policy must be in place by August 1, 2007 due to administrative licensure applications arriving in the Office of Educator Licensure for the upcoming school year. This will put in place a historical timeline by which the SLLA will require the cut score of 165.

The report from the SLLA review panel and the Educational Testing Service (ETS) data on state test scores is attached.

Backup Material: Attached

Recommendation: Approval

EDUCATOR LICENSURE

18. Approval to begin the Administrative Procedures Act Process: To Amend the Passing Score for the School Leadership Licensure Assessment (SLLA) Exam as Recommended by the Commission on Teacher and Administrator Education, Certification and Licensure Development

**MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
JACKSON, MISSISSIPPI
MARCH 20, 2007**

Participants

Mississippi Score Setting Study (SSS) School Leaders Licensure Assessment (SLLA) Panelists

Gerald Hasselman, Director of Educational Leadership, Mississippi College,
William Heller, Principal, Saint Joseph Catholic High School
Gloria Lewis-Washington, Principal, Linwood Elementary
Dr. Doris Smith, Professor, Mississippi College
Pamela Felder, Educational Consultant, JBHM Education Group

Mississippi Department of Education Staff

Cindy Coon, Director of Educator Licensure
Cindy Chester, Special Projects Officer

ETS Staff

Katherine Bassett, Director, Client Relations, Praxis
Cory Murphy, Director, Client Relations, Praxis

PURPOSE OF MEETING

The purpose of this meeting was to review state specific data generated for the School Leaders Licensure Assessment used for licensing teachers and administrators in the state of Mississippi respectively. This was done in an effort to yield a recommended passing score for final approval by the Mississippi State Board of Education. Prior to the score review, panelists were presented a brief overview of the test development process. This was completed to provide the attendees with background information as to how we had arrived at the role that they were called together to play in the test adoption process. Discussion of the two tests reviewed is available in the subsequent sections below.

MEETING PROCEDURE

SLLA Panel

1:00 Welcome and Introductions

30 Overview of Steps to Test Development and State Adoption Process

2:15 Distribution, Review, and Discussion of Score Setting Study Materials

Discussion and Recommendations

School Leaders Licensure Assessment (Recommended Score: 165)

The panelists began the discussion by stating they are very unhappy with ETS for placing an assistant principal on the SLLA revision panel instead of a higher education representative. The panelists reminded the ETS staff that Mississippi had been an integral part of the original SLLA development team. The panel, which consisted of primarily higher education representatives, stated that they did not feel that the state was adequately represented by an assistant principal from an urban school district.

Mr. Murphy reminded the panel that while in the position of Bureau Chief for the Mississippi Licensure and Certification office, he had personally reached out to each and every Institution of Higher Education preparing school administrators to request recommendations for the ETS development team. Not receiving recommendation, Mr. Murphy then reached out to school districts. He forwarded all recommendations to ETS.

Ms. Bassett described the criteria that ETS uses to empanel a National Advisory Committee, stating that ETS must have representation from higher education, practitioners at each developmental level, race, gender, and school setting. She also asked the panel if they would like an ETS representative to present at their next Deans meeting to provide an overview of the revision process to date. She also stated that she would find out if there will be an item writing team for the SLLA; if there is, Mississippi will have a higher education representative on that panel.

The panel stated that they would like an update and would appreciate representation on the item writing panel. They also expressed appreciation for the opportunity to air their dissatisfaction.

Attention then turned to the process of revisiting the SLLA score. The panel stated that the current score is set too low based upon the high pass rate for the state in this area. Also noted was that the state must raise the bar for excellence and refrain from settling for mediocrity. Leadership is a key factor in the success of the K-12 educational system. Panelists indicated that a higher score would assist in weeding out those candidates who are not properly prepared to serve in the role of an effective instructional leader.

The panelists reviewed and discussed the SLLA TAAG, test information sheets, three year rolling data and state specific data. The recommended score yielded from the state specific attending institutional data was 165. This score was the consensus of the group. The panelists arrived at this conclusion noting the following justification:

- Currently, the state specific attending institutional data indicates that if the score is set at 165, it would yield an 87% passage rate;
- The state review the score within one year and raise it if necessary;

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- State specific data indicates that a majority of all candidates prepared in state would successfully challenge exam at recommended score;
 - Increasing score would cause administrator preparation program providers to strengthen their admission criteria.
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Next Steps

- The reports from all score setting studies with recommendations will be forwarded to the Mississippi Department of Education personnel to undergo their score adoption protocol.
- After receiving final approval by the state board of education, test adoption forms will be forwarded to and completed by the state department.
- Ms. Bassett has informed Ms. Florence Cucchi, who is coordinating the SLLA revision process for the Client Relations team, of the concerns of this panel. Ms. Cucchi will ascertain whether or not an item writing panel will be used for SLLA. She will also provide Mr. Murphy with a PowerPoint presentation to use as the basis for a presentation at the Dean's meeting to update the Deans on the revision work on the SLLA.

School Leaders Licensure Assessment (1010)

Test at a Glance

Name:	School Leaders Licensure Assessment
Test Code:	1010
Time:	6 hours (total test), four timed sections
Number of Scored Responses:	25
Format:	Constructed Response

Test Modules	Number of Scored Responses	Time in Hours
Evaluation of Actions I	10	1
Evaluation of Actions II	6	1
Synthesis of Information and Problem Solving	2	2
Analysis of Information and Decision Making	7	2

The six-hour assessment is organized into three two-hour modules. The first module is further split into two one-hour sections. All of the exercises require the test taker to write a response.

Module I: Evaluation of Actions I and II

(2 hours)

The first module contains two separate one-hour sections, Evaluation of Actions I and II. The sections are timed separately.

Section I:

Evaluation of Actions I (1 hour)

There are 10 short vignettes in the first one-hour section. Each describes a situation a principal might commonly encounter and be required to respond to. Each vignette is followed by a

focused question that asks what the principal might do next, what factors the principal should consider in responding to the situation, how the principal might handle the situation or dilemma presented, or what the potential consequences of action in the situation are. The test taker is required to answer the question with specific detail and to give a rationale for the answer when appropriate. This category includes vignettes that deal with situations drawn from and distributed among such content areas as due process and other legal issues, exceptional needs students, safety, facilities, budget, discipline, technology, and scheduling.

Section II:

Evaluation of Actions II (1 hour)

The second one-hour section contains six longer vignettes. Each presents a dilemma based on learning and teaching issues. The test taker is asked a focused analytical question. The response requires the test taker to balance competing claims for resources, prioritize actions, articulate the instructional issues raised by the situation, explain instructional and curricular strategies appropriate in responding to the situation, and discuss the situation's instructional implications.

School Leaders Licensure Assessment (1010)

Module II: Synthesis of Information and Problem Solving

(2 hours)

This module of the assessment consists of two one-hour case analyses. Each case is anchored in issues of learning and teaching.

For each case, test takers are presented with a set of several documents. Test takers are also given a short scenario describing a school and its community. They are required to examine all documents and select from these documents relevant information to answer questions that pose complex problems and require the test takers to propose courses of action to address the problems.

One set of documents is relevant to an elementary school setting, and the other is relevant to a middle or high school setting.

Module III: Analysis of Information and Decision Making

(2 hours)

In this module, test takers are presented with seven documents typical of those encountered by school administrators. At least six of the seven documents relate to issues involving learning and teaching. Using the information in each document, test takers respond to two questions about the document.

The types of documents used in this module may include:

- assessment data
- portions of school improvement plans
- budget information
- schedules
- resource allocation documents
- staff evaluations
- curriculum information

The types of questions may include:

- What is the important issue in the data presented in this document?
- What other information would you need to assess the information presented in the document?
- Where would you get such information?
- What important patterns do you observe in the data presented in the document?
- What steps would you take with your staff to address the issues raised by the data presented in the document?
- How would you present the information contained in this document to parents, community organizations, staff, etc.?

How Exercises Are Scored

All of the exercises in the School Leaders Licensure Assessment are scored by school leaders who have been carefully trained in the *ISLLC Standards* and the content specifications for the assessment. Scorers are trained to make distinctions among responses according to scoring rubrics, or guides, developed for each exercise. Prior to determining the score for any test taker, scorers examine, discuss, and practice scoring many sample responses, guided by a trainer who is very familiar with the assessment and with test takers' responses.

All exercises are tried out and pretested responses carefully analyzed before exercises are used in an operational form of the assessment. The responses to the pretest questions serve as the basis for determining the clarity and soundness of the exercise, as well as for articulating the preliminary scoring rubric for the exercise.

The *ISLLC Standards* detail the particular values and the vision of effective practice that will guide and shape the scoring of these exercises. Sample candidate responses and the scoring rubrics used to evaluate them begin on page 3.

School Leaders Licensure Assessment (1010)

Module I: **Evaluation of Actions I and II**

Evaluation of Actions I

All ten exercises in the Evaluation of Actions I section are scored on a three-point scale, with 2 the highest possible score and 0 the lowest.

Sample Exercise

Read the vignette below and briefly and specifically answer the question that follows:

It is early December and the students in an elementary school are practicing for the annual holiday concert. A parent phones the school to insist that her child not be required to sing any of the Christmas songs. The principal excuses the child from participation in the music practice.

Do you agree with the principal's action? Give a rationale, citing factors that are relevant to a principal's decisions in such situations.

Relevant ISLLC Standards

Standards 2, 4, and 5

General Scoring Guide

The following general scoring guide is used to score all responses in the Evaluation of Actions I Module

Score: 2

A score of 2 presents a reasoned response based on a clear understanding and application of the underlying standards.

A typical response in this category

- demonstrates a clear understanding of the standards applicable to the vignette
- applies the appropriate standards in a manner that is consistent with the intent and spirit of the standards
- provides a clear and specific answer to the question asked
- provides a logical and reasonable rationale for answers when requested

Score: 1

A score of 1 presents a response based on a general understanding and application of the underlying standards, but may also be uneven in its presentation.

A typical response in this category

- demonstrates a general understanding of the standards applicable to the vignette
- applies the standards in a manner that is supportive of the intent and spirit of the standards
- provides a general or uneven answer to the question
- provides an acceptable rationale for answers when requested

Score: 0

A score of 0 may demonstrate some competence in responding to the question, but is clearly limited or flawed.

A typical response in this category

- demonstrates a weak understanding of the standards applicable to the vignette
- does not apply appropriate standards or applies standards in opposition to the intent and spirit of the standards
- provides a vague or inappropriate answer to the question
- provides a weak, inappropriate, or illogical rationale or does not provide a rationale when one is requested

School Leaders Licensure Assessment (1010)

Sample Responses

The following are examples of actual responses (transcribed with errors) given by principal candidates to the sample exercise from Evaluation of Actions I. The score assigned to each is written above the response. An italicized explanation of how the score was derived is included below the response. Two examples are provided at each score point.

Sample Response 1 (Score = 2)

Yes, I agree with the principal's actions. First of all, parents have rights related to religious issues, and since this is a "holiday" concert, the principal should be sensitive to the parent's concerns. I think the principal should also ask the teachers to examine the program carefully, to be sure it is not advocating any one religion or that it would not be offensive to any group of students. Also, perhaps the principal should suggest some alternative activity for the student so the student will not feel left out.

Commentary: This reasoned response clearly cites several factors that are relevant to the principal's decision, such as the parent's student's rights, examining the content of the concert to determine its appropriateness for all students, and finding an alternative activity for the student. Each of the rationales provided demonstrates an understanding of how the appropriate standards should be applied.

Sample Response 2 (Score = 2)

Before removing the child from the school activity, I would discuss with the parent the scope and purpose of the concert. In these days, very few concerts have "religious" songs in them in public schools. I would explain the cultural intent of the concert, and the need the children have to be part of such school activities. However, if the parent still wants the student excluded, I would excuse the child, because parents do have legal rights.

Commentary: This response presents clear reasoning in identifying relevant factors such as acknowledging the parent's/student's rights and meeting with the parent to discuss the objectives. The rationales provided are logical and reasonable, as well as based on the application of appropriate standards. While the response suggests trying to convince the parent, it is still respectful of the parent's point of view and legal rights.

Sample Response 3 (Score = 1)

The parent has the legal right to have the child removed from the activity if the content is objectionable from a religious point of view. Although I might want the parent to go ahead and allow the student to be involved, I would honor the parent's right to have the student excluded.

Commentary: By acknowledging the parent's/student's rights, this response identifies one factor the principal should consider, but it misses other important factors that would also be relevant in making a decision. While this response demonstrates some understanding of the standards and provides an acceptable response to the question, it is not as fully reasoned and the rationale is not as developed as a response scored a '2'.

Sample Response 4 (Score = 1)

I would allow the student to not participate, but I would work with the teacher to find another activity for the student to develop some of the same performance skills that would be learned by participating in the concert.

Commentary: Even though this response appropriately suggests an alternative activity for the student, by not recognizing the rights of the parent/student, it misses a factor central to demonstrating a clear understanding and application of the standards. As such, the response demonstrates a general understanding of the standards and suggests actions that are supportive of but not fully consistent with the underlying standards.

Sample Response 5 (Score = 0)

The principal did not do the right thing. The concert is an official part of the school curriculum, and if the principal begins making exceptions for one parent, the principal will have to make exceptions for every parent who wants something, and then the school will no longer have a standard curriculum.

Commentary: This response is clearly limited. While it provides a clear and specific response to the question, it is not sensitive to the parent's concerns and does not suggest a problem-solving approach. The approach provided in the response is inappropriate for the situation, does not demonstrate an understanding of the standards or the law, and actually violates the general sense of the ISLLC Standards.

School Leaders Licensure Assessment (1010)

Sample Response 6 (Score = 0)

The principal did the right thing. The principal has to rely on the public, and especially the parents, for support for the school. If the principal does not go along with this parent, the parent may turn against the principal and the school, and may even get other parents to do the same thing. So, for political reasons, this is the right thing to do.

Commentary: In agreeing with the principal, this response seems to take the correct position, however, the factors cited as relevant to the principal's decision are not appropriate and do not demonstrate an understanding of the applicable standards. As such, the response is clearly limited.

Evaluation of Actions II

All six exercises in the Evaluation of Actions II section are scored on a three-point scale, with 2 the highest possible score and 0 the lowest.

Sample Exercise

Read the vignette below and specifically respond to the prompt that follows.

In March, a high school senior presents a letter from his mother requesting, contrary to school policy, that he be allowed to drop physics, because he is failing the class. He is also failing several other classes, but he does not need to pass physics to graduate. The principal consults with the teachers and with the student's counselor. They all concur that the student could be passing all his courses, including physics, if he worked harder. However, the principal, persuaded by the parent's argument that the stress of physics is adversely affecting her son, authorizes the student to drop the course.

Evaluate the principal's action from the point of view of learning and teaching.

Relevant ISLLC Standards

Standards 2, 4, and 5

General Scoring Guide

The following general scoring guide is used to score all responses in the Evaluation of Actions II Module.

Score: 2

A score of 2 presents a well-developed analysis based on a clear understanding and application of the underlying standards.

A typical response in this category

- demonstrates a clear understanding of the standards applicable to the vignette
- applies the appropriate standards in a manner that is consistent with the intent and spirit of the standards
- expresses clear recognition of the key conflict or issues presented in the vignette
- analyzes the situation and provides a clear and specific answer to the question asked
- provides a logical and reasonable rationale for the answer given

Score: 1

A score of 1 presents an analysis based on a general understanding and application of the underlying standards, but may also be uneven in its presentation.

A typical response in this category

- demonstrates a general understanding of the standards applicable to the vignette
- applies the standards in a manner that is supportive of the intent and spirit of the standards
- expresses general awareness of the key conflict or issues presented in the vignette
- demonstrates some analytical ability in answering the question but provides a general or uneven answer
- provides an acceptable rationale for the answer given

Score: 0

A score of 0 may demonstrate some competence in understanding or analyzing the issue, but is clearly limited or flawed.

A typical response in this category

- demonstrates a weak understanding of the standards applicable to the vignette
- does not apply appropriate standards or applies standards in opposition to the intent or spirit of the standards

School Leaders Licensure Assessment (1010)

- misinterprets or has limited recognition or understanding of the key conflict or issues presented in the vignette
- demonstrates little or no analysis of the situation, provides a vague or inappropriate answer to the question, or merely paraphrases the question
- provides a weak, inappropriate, or illogical rationale or does not provide a rationale when one is requested

Sample Responses

The following are examples of actual responses (transcribed with errors) given by principal candidates to the sample exercise from Evaluation of Actions II. The score assigned to each is written above the response. An italicized explanation of how the score was derived is included below the response. Two examples are provided at each score point.

Sample Response 1 (Score = 2)

I would concur with the principal's decision as being in the child's best interests. However, I would want to set up an action plan with the student, parents, teachers and counselor regarding his approach to school. Since he has the ability to pass, why isn't he? I would want to investigate this with all concerned, in order to help the student think about himself as a learner. I would replace the physics period with an assigned study hall monitored by one of his teachers or the counselor. The student would be responsible for gathering all the work he needs to complete to pass his other classes and work on these materials during the study hall. A teacher or counselor will assist the student in planning out this work and methodically completing it. The student would need to complete all of the other class requirements and raise his grades to passing levels in order to graduate. I would work with the student and the parent to work out a contract to this effect as part of the agreement that he will drop physics.

I would also want the counselor to work with the student on his mental attitude. There could be many reasons why he is doing so poorly, and these should be addressed. The parent might also want to hire a tutor in any area that is giving the student specific trouble. Student attendance would also need to be regular and punctual.

Commentary: Emphasizing what is in the best interest of the student, this response presents a well-developed analysis based on clear understanding and application of the underlying standards. As it evaluates the principal's actions, it presents its own plan centered in teaching and learning that involves both the parent

and the student in facing the problem along with appropriate staff members in analyzing and solving the problem.

Sample Response 2 (Score = 2)

The principal's action is acceptable because the parent is the child's "first teacher." Without parent support, the school can do little to motivate a 17/18 year old who has decided not to work as hard as necessary. The principal might want to talk more with the parent to help determine a plan that will help the student graduate and feel good about himself. The student should be clearly reminded that parent and school have high expectations for achievement in the remaining courses, given the removal of the stress as articulated by the mother. The counselor should be directed to carefully monitor the student's progress via a progress report from each remaining teacher weekly. The pupil's increased achievement should be appropriately reinforced so that he will leave the high school experience on a positive note. Success at the end of high school will have a positive effect for future learning opportunities.

Commentary: This well-developed analysis is based on what is in the student's best interest and demonstrates a clear understanding of the underlying standards and their application. Providing good examples of how standards-based teaching and learning strategies can be used to resolve the problem, the response discusses working directly with the student, involving the parent in arriving at a positive solution, and involving counselors and teachers in monitoring progress toward graduation.

Sample Response 3 (Score = 1)

The principal's action of letting the student "bail out" is acceptable. However, the principal should make a plan so that the student can graduate. This plan would in some way make sure that the student will improve his performance in the remaining classes. Or, the principal might suggest an alternate way for the student to get credit for physics—perhaps an independent project approach with a pass/fail grade. A compromise might be struck to insure a win/win rather than a win/lose or a lose/lose approach.

Commentary: This response presents an analysis based on a general, but somewhat limited, understanding and application of the standards. While the rationale for the answer is acceptable and the actions suggested in the response are partially supportive of the standards, the response does not go beyond providing a general answer. The response could be strengthened through a deeper understanding of the standards by suggesting the involvement of parents, teachers, and counselors and/or the need for the parent and the student to accept responsibility for the situation.

School Leaders Licensure Assessment (1010)

Sample Response 4 (Score = 1)

I disagree with the principal's action in allowing the student to drop the course contrary to school policy. In the original request the parent did not indicate that stress was the problem. The principal was fair to listen to the parent and consider her request for an exception to policy. But to make a decision at that point was premature. He should talk more with the parent, get more specific information about the nature of the "stress," before he makes a decision.

Commentary: This response raises issues that can be viewed as being in the best interest of the student and also suggests that the principal meet with the parent to get more information before proceeding, so it does convey understanding of the standards and the key issues involved. However, it does not present a well-developed analysis or express clear understanding of the question. The response approaches the issue from a policy standpoint rather than the teaching and learning point of view requested in the question. Additionally, a portion of the response seems to signal a misreading of the vignette. Overall, the response is general and uneven.

Sample Response 5 (Score = 0)

The policy is in place and should be adhered to, especially since this student's failing grade is not a matter of inability but a matter of not attending to the task at hand. The student should be held to the rules, the same as all students. When a principal starts to bend (or break) the rules, then everyone else will expect the same thing.

Commentary: Focusing only on the need to adhere to the rules and ignoring the best interests of the student, this response does not demonstrate an understanding of the applicable standards or the key issues presented in the vignette.

Sample Response 6 (Score = 0)

The principal's action is wrong. The student has the ability to pass not only physics but his other classes. Much more is learned in high school than the academics. Students must learn that there are consequences for their actions. Failure to apply yourself in your senior year can result in failure of courses. If this student is allowed to graduate, the lesson he will learn is that he doesn't have to accept the consequences for his actions.

Commentary: While this response demonstrates some analytical ability and purports an intent to teach the student a lesson, it is clearly flawed because it fails to suggest a supportive approach to the problem that would be consistent with standards-based

practices. Even though the response supports students taking responsibility for their actions, which is one of the applicable standards, the manner suggested is in opposition to the intent and spirit of the standards.

Module II: Synthesis of Information and Problem Solving

Both exercises (cases) in the Synthesis of Information and Problem Solving section are scored on a four-point scale, with 3 the highest possible score and 0 the lowest. The responses to the two questions within each case are treated as a single response for scoring purposes, so only one score is assigned to each case.

Sample Exercise

In this section of the assessment, you will use the scenario and the school improvement goals presented and the documents provided on the following pages as the basis for answering the questions.

Scenario

You are the newly assigned principal of James Madison School, an elementary school with an excellent reputation in the area, enriched programs in all grades, and a high level of parent participation. The district has embarked on a major initiative in cooperative learning. By and large, the community has been quite supportive. In recent years, the school has experienced rapid growth as a result of extensive real estate development in the area. One change evident in the past five years is that a much smaller proportion of the student population now participates in lessons, classes, sports activities, and other educational and personal opportunities outside the scope of the school.

School Improvement Goals

- To improve implementation of cooperative learning in all classrooms
- To improve achievement levels of all students in basic skills in the core areas: reading, writing, mathematics

School Leaders Licensure Assessment (1010)

Documents

- School fact sheet
- Achievement data for the current year and the three previous years combined
- Excerpts from a school improvement plan (completed by the previous principal)
- A letter from a parent to the principal

Questions

Read all of the documents presented in this section and consider the scenario and school improvement goals given above. Address each of the following questions:

1. Based on your understanding of learning and teaching and larger educational issues, identify and describe the broader challenges faced by the school.
2. Evaluate the given school improvement plan in terms of its strengths and weaknesses. Describe the actions the principal should take to implement the plan and elicit community support.

School Fact Sheet

1. James Madison School is one of five elementary schools in Cherry Springs School District. The school's population has been increasing over the past five years. There are still three classes per grade level, with an average of 26 students in each class, as compared to 21 students per class five years ago.
2. The number of students who are enrolled in basic skills (developmental) classes (selected by scores on district assessments) has increased dramatically over the past five years, from about 4 students in each grade level to about 20 students in each grade.
3. The school has an active parent organization. Among other things, the parent organization has conducted a successful fundraising campaign and donated all the profits to the school's computer program.
4. Some of the leaders of the parent organization have made a point of requesting certain teachers for their children. While this is theoretically contrary to district policy, most of the requests have been honored.
5. A subsidized housing project has brought many children of low-income families into the school for the first time.
6. The school's budget for professional development for the year is \$1,500.
7. There are two one-half days available for school-based staff development during the year.

School Leaders Licensure Assessment (1010)

Cherry Springs School District

District Grade 3 Reading Test Data

	Last Year	Mean of Three Previous Years Combined
Number of Students	445	335
Percent Meeting Standard	71%	68%
Percent Slightly Below Standard	23%	28%
Percent Far Below Standard	6%	4%

James Madison Elementary School Grade 3 Reading Test Data

	Last Year	Mean of Three Previous Years Combined
Number of Students	75	68
Percent Meeting Standard	73%	87%
Percent Slightly Below Standard	19%	11%
Percent Far Below Standard	8%	2%

SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLAN (completed by previous principal)

School: James Madison

School Year: _____

Goal #1: To improve implementation of cooperative learning in all classrooms

Activity	Responsibility	Date to be Completed	Cost	Evaluation
1.1 Purchase books on cooperative learning for the school's professional library.	Principal	October	\$75	Purchase Orders
1.2 Arrange for workshop on cooperative learning for fall staff development day.	Principal	November	\$500	Workshop evaluations
1.3 Grade level teams meet to enhance plans for cooperative learning in classrooms.	Team leaders	December	None	Team meeting minutes
1.4 Report card committee determines how to handle cooperative learning activities in grading.	Principal	March	None	Committee meeting minutes

School: James Madison

School Year: _____

Goal #2: To improve achievement levels of all students in basic skills in the core areas: reading, writing, mathematics

Activity	Responsibility	Date to be Completed	Cost	Evaluation
2.1 Purchase materials for student test preparation.	Principal	September	\$150	Purchase Orders
2.2 Demonstrate test preparation materials at faculty meeting.	Principal	October	None	Faculty meeting minutes
2.3 Implement student test prep program.	Teachers	June	None	Test scores
2.4 Analyze reading and mathematics books for alignment with test items.	Team leaders	November	None	Notes from analysis
2.5 Identify supplemental materials to teach identified skills.	Team leaders	December	None	Identified materials
2.6 Purchase necessary supplemental materials.	Principal	January	\$500	Purchase orders
2.7 Provide in-service to entire faculty on use of supplemental materials.	Team leaders	March	None	Agenda from Staff Development Day

School Leaders Licensure Assessment (1010)

123 Willow Street

Cherry Springs, PA 16811

Dear (name withheld):

We have been residents of Cherry Springs for the past 15 years, and have been very pleased with the education our children have received in the public schools. Our youngest daughter has been part of the "Challenge Program" at James Madison and has enjoyed the additional enrichment provided by that program. On Tuesdays and Thursdays, when she goes to her Challenge class, she comes home bubbling about the things they have done.

However, it now appears that the district has succumbed to one of the latest fads in education with no regard for its educational merit or the consequences of doing so. This year's fad is something called "cooperative learning," which appears to undo many of the benefits our daughter derives from her Challenge program. Our daughter has been placed in a "cooperative" group with four other students. As far as we can tell, there is nothing cooperative about it. One student appears to do all the work for the group. Even if they all receive the same grade, the grades are high because our daughter sees to it that the work is well done. If she were to shirk her role for the benefit of the group, her grades would suffer and she would lose her standing in the school.

We urge that the school re-examine its commitment to "cooperative learning" and allow some students the option of working on their own. We have information to make some students "cooperate" with other students with whom they have little in common and for whom they do the lion's share of the work.

Sincerely,

(name withheld) parent

(name withheld) parent

cc: Superintendent of Schools

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Relevant ISLLC Standards

Standards 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6

General Scoring Guide

The following general scoring guide is used to score all responses in the Synthesis of Information and Problem Solving Module.

Score: 3

A score of 3 presents a well-developed analysis that synthesizes important information from the case components and demonstrates a clear understanding and application of the underlying standards.

A typical response in this category

- demonstrates a clear understanding of the standards applicable to the analysis of the case
- applies the appropriate standards in a manner that is consistent with the intent and spirit of the standards
- demonstrates recognition of the important issues, conflicts, or challenges in the case
- selects important and relevant information from the scenario, the goals, and the documents to answer the questions
- provides detailed, specific, and convincing answers to the questions and supports the answers with specific examples and strong reasoning
- proposes logical and reasonable courses of action to address problems raised in the questions

Score: 2

A score of 2 presents an adequate analysis that uses some of the important information from the case components and demonstrates a general understanding and application of the underlying standards.

A typical response in this category

- demonstrates a general understanding of the standards applicable to the analysis of the case
- applies the standards in a manner that is supportive of the intent and spirit of the standards
- demonstrates some awareness of the important issues, conflicts, or challenges in the case
- uses relevant, but not always the most important, information from the scenario, the goals, and the documents to answer the questions
- provides general but informed answers to the questions, provides uneven answers to one or more questions, and/or provides general support and adequate reasoning
- proposes rational courses of action to address problems raised in the questions

Score: 1

A score of 1 may demonstrate some competence in analyzing the case and using the information, but is clearly limited or flawed.

A typical response in this category

- demonstrates a weak understanding of the standards applicable to the analysis of the case
- demonstrates unclear or uneven application of the standards or applies standards in ways that are not fully consistent with their intent
- overlooks important relevant information in the document or misinterprets or misunderstands some of the information, concepts, and/or issues presented in the case
- provides a vague or skeletal response to most of the questions or provides limited or uneven support for the response
- proposes rational courses of action to address problems raised in the questions, but reasoning may have gaps or not be clearly connected

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Score: 0

A score of 0 fails to address basic components of the prompt
A typical response in this category

A typical response in this category

- demonstrates little or no understanding of the standards applicable to the analysis of the case
- does not apply appropriate standards or applies standards in opposition to the intent and spirit of the standards
- omits important relevant information from the case and/or fundamentally misinterprets or misunderstands the information, concepts, and/or issues presented in the document
- provides an inappropriate, illogical, or generic answer to the question or fails to provide any support for the answer provided
- proposes an illogical or irrational course of action or fails to propose a course of action when requested

Sample Responses

The following are examples of actual responses (transcribed with errors) given by principal candidates to the sample exercise from Synthesis of Information and Problem Solving. The score assigned to each is written above the response. An italicized explanation of how the score was derived is included below the response. Two examples are provided at each score point.

Sample Response 1 (Score = 3)

Question 1

James Madison is faced with increasingly higher enrollments at all grade levels. In addition, a sizable segment of the new population is from a different socioeconomic class.

With regard to class size, the district and school may need to look at additional classroom space before class size becomes an overwhelming issue. The school may need to have a construction project or the district may have to reevaluate the school boundaries.

The different socioeconomic group will need to be assimilated into the school population. The school climate/culture may need to change and adapt in order to prevent possible conflict between groups. Actually, cooperative

learning as a school goal is an excellent strategy for including various groups. However, it seems that the evidence suggests that not all parents support cooperative learning or understand its purpose. Also, some parents have indicated that cooperative learning might not have been implemented correctly because there is a concern over how students are graded.

The lack of involvement in social, academic, and cultural activities also implies that there is a lessening in community spirit and the school is seen as strictly an academic institution without a life.

Student achievement as determined by standardized tests is on the decline. Although the school is still ahead of the district in most categories, the last year scores vs. mean scores indicate there has been a fairly dramatic increase in the lowest scoring range.

Question 2

The school improvement plan with regard to cooperative learning needs to be ongoing. Grade-level team meetings could be used for this purpose. Students shouldn't be graded on cooperative work and the report card shouldn't be changed for this purpose. It would detract from the overall goal. The grade-level teams can develop ways to use cooperative learning as "bonus points". For an initial step into cooperative learning, grading should still rest mainly in individual accountability. Group grades are the "nemesis" of cooperative learning.

Cooperative learning will help develop a positive school climate, include new students, and possibly contribute to higher student achievement levels. Perhaps it will bolster the desire to join clubs and teams.

Basic skills—remove test prep program portion and concentrate on improving classroom instruction. Look at class size. Teaching faculty how to use supplemental materials in March is too late. Identify materials in the fall and purchase them. Move the 2nd staff development day to November. Staff development at the end of the year is not productive.

It is important that the school look at student assessment data because of the 3-year trend in the reading tests and the increased numbers scoring below standard. The principal can't assume that "low-income families" are the reason for the scores going down. This may be part of it, but there may be other problems—class size, lack of school spirit—losing a sense of community and togetherness. Also, it is important to know if the teachers are meeting the individual needs of those students who are part of this changing population.

In the implementation of the plan, since cooperative learning is Goal 1, the principal should put a more intensive effort into training teachers. In addition to a one-day in-

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service training on cooperative learning, the principal should provide ongoing training—at least once or twice a month. This would require the use of more money. The principal shouldn't wait until December to get the grade-level teams together or wait until November for the in-service. The one day should be held in early October—begin grade-level meetings immediately after. Select 1 or 2 definitive books on the subject and purchase 1 for each teacher—utilize grade-level teams as strategy groups and discussion groups for the research. Have teachers develop cooperative teams and run them past colleagues at the grade level meeting.

The principal should also provide 2 or 3 parent meetings on cooperative learning to explain the strategy and to show how it will help improve student learning. If the parent's letter is correct, cooperative learning is not being done correctly and it lacks parental support.

Once the new cooperative learning plan is put into place the principal must develop a way to monitor its effectiveness. Teachers and the principal must monitor student academic progress continually to be sure students are learning the material, now aligned with the standards.

With regard to basic skills (Goal 2), I don't agree with the test prep programs. I would focus more attention on upgrading the classroom instruction. The first thing would be to be sure teacher lesson planning and classroom tests are aligned with the curriculum content standards and the district assessments. Getting teachers to stick to the standards is critical. Also, the classroom computers (if there are any) could be used for drill and practice and ongoing student testing to be sure they are mastering the content throughout the year. The principal should also purchase software for this purpose so students are getting reinforcement in the regular classes as well as in basic skills. The principal should look at remedial class size and meeting times—are more staff needed? Parent volunteers could also be used to work with flexible groups of students in classrooms to improve skills. The focus should be on strengthening class instruction and regularly monitoring student progress.

In order to elicit community support, the principal should do the following:

1. Set up 2–3 evening meetings to explain and demonstrate cooperative learning to parents.
2. Distribute cooperative learning research to parents.
3. Provide book lists as well as a parent library for cooperative learning books.
4. Let parents know that fund-raising done for computers will be used to enhance basic skills.
5. Have computer teacher hold a workshop to demonstrate new software.
6. Invite parents to volunteer time to work with small groups of children in classrooms.
7. Set up some activities with PTA to include new families in school community.
8. Set up a parent-student reading program to enhance reading skills. (There are many around—one is "Book It"—parents and students read together—a goal is set and when achieved, students earn pizza.)

Commentary: This response presents a well-developed analysis that synthesizes the information provided and demonstrates a clear understanding and application of the underlying standards. The responses to the questions are detailed, specific, and convincing. The responses interpret the stimulus materials and address the implications of the challenges faced by the school as a result of a growing, more diverse school population and community. Most of the critical issues are identified and it is frequently noted how they impact each other. For instance, it was noted that the new population of lower socioeconomic students are contributing to the lower achievement levels, but is also noted how they might feel alienated in their new school. The response shows how cooperative learning might address both issues. In addition, the response goes beyond the basic information provided in the documents and examines other, less obvious possible causes of the poor achievement levels. Understanding and addressing the individual, and the perhaps unique needs of the new students, clearly involves both the spirit and intent of the standards. Both the evaluation and the implementation of the school improvement plan show insight into how effective change occurs. This is best demonstrated by the suggestions for changing the scheduling of the professional development activities to make them more effective in bringing about the desired change in teacher behavior. The implementation includes stakeholders by helping parents understand cooperative learning and attempting to gain their support.

Sample Response 2 (Score = 3)

The broad based issues the school must resolve are in the areas of communication and public relations, changing student population, increased class size, declines in student achievement, community and parent involvement, curriculum and instruction, budget, staff development and strategic planning.

There is a need for communication and P.R. Cooperative learning is a sound strategy instructionally. However, this must be communicated to the public and the principal's role is to share this information with the stakeholders. Whenever

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there is a letter writing campaign, this issue as a public relations concern must be addressed. Communication avenues must be fully open, for example advisory boards, newsletters, coffee meetings, etc., or a domino effect will likely occur. The principal should share with the parents the increased opportunities that are available to students in cooperative programs.

Curriculum and instruction should be reviewed and addressed through increased staff development funds and additional released time. The allotted dollars for staff development are too scant to be truly useful and not all the allocated staff development funds are used. Vanguard events and practices are excluded from the bare bones budget which is cannibalized by the School Improvement Plan. Based upon increased student enrollment and the changing nature of the students, the budget should be realigned as should the class size/student: teacher ratios. Although the percent of the students meeting the standard exceeds district levels, the percents below standard and far below standard are below district level expectations. Although the School Fact Sheet does not state that the real estate development in the area includes multi-family units (only subsidized housing projects), the decline in test scores might point to this, or to mobility rate factors. In addition, the increase in students who are receiving instruction in basic skills presents a budgetary tension since there are still only three classes per level with no increase in sight for the past five years. There is a need to address the changing student population in the school in a broad way, in terms of what it means for instruction so that students can achieve academically and in terms of the kinds of activities the school might provide.

Budgetary constraints appear to be strangling the instructional and curricular issues faced by the school, which by all indications will continue to result in a decline in standardized test scores. Staff development dollars are minimal, and time for training and upgrading skills is minimal and needs to be increased as well as adding additional classes to decrease class size. The public at large also needs to be educated. Although the PTA is an effective arm of the school, there needs to be budgetary line items allotted to parent training.

To implement the school improvement plan, there could be a committee formed to collaborate and rearrange the sequence of activities. For example, for Goal 1, the committee should determine the grading standards before the program is implemented and share these standards with the constituents. The principal should facilitate this activity and guide the committee. Concurrent with this, the materials for reference should be decided upon by the committee. Prior to the beginning of the year, the training should occur so that the expectancies are developed and are concurrent with

curriculum standards. The evaluation of the cooperative learning workshop should not be based on whether the staff liked the in-service but rather on achievement of students in collaborative learning after new instruction.

Goal 2 needs reconsideration by the teachers, to place more emphasis on instruction and less emphasis on test preparation. Along with this reconsideration would come revised activities and budget. Additionally, Goal 2 should also have a realignment of timelines and should be tackled by a committee. The sequence should follow the same procedure as above with the training and in-service prior to the beginning of school. The committee should first of all review the statistics, last year's results—norm vs. criterion-referenced tests—and analyze this information, then develop and refine the plan, train, purchase and then implement and regroup and reevaluate. The sequence is not consistent with the instructional cadence of the school year. In addition, although the principal is ultimately the person where the buck stops as far as the purchase order, it is the teachers who will use the materials and therefore they should collaborate on the selection of all the items, both for revised instruction and, if it's still going to happen, for test preparation.

The goals for the school improvement plan are acceptable, but the activities and the timelines need to go back to the drawing board and should involve all stakeholders in the educational process (including the author of the letter). The new plan should rethink how to improve student achievement and include more activities to address instruction and fewer to address test-taking.

School improvement is only a paper process unless everyone who is responsible for the children is a participant in the process, not merely an observer.

Commentary: This well-developed analysis draws important information from the documents and presents it in a manner that demonstrates recognition of the important issues, conflicts, and challenges in the case. The analysis of the broader challenges facing the school, especially those involving curriculum, instruction, and budgeting, is clear, detailed, and convincing. In addressing these challenges, the response goes beyond mere identification and description to explore some of the implications and make suggestions for improvement. The evaluation and implementation of the school improvement plan shows an understanding of logical sequences and the need to reevaluate activities in view of teaching and learning. The overall response demonstrates a clear understanding of the standards applicable to the analysis of the case and applies the standards in an appropriate manner. Throughout the analysis, the response clearly places the success of all students as a priority and clearly advocates a standards-based rationale for action.

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Sample Response 3 (Score = 2)

Question 1

Given the change in the school population and the socio-economic makeup of the district, the principal may need to consider ways of addressing the needs of the current population. This could include alternative methods of instruction, project-based as well as alternative assessment, and working with differing learning styles and approaches. Substitutes could be used to allow time for teachers at grade level and at different grade levels to meet and adjust curriculum, expectations, specialized techniques and focus. This saves on professional development budget. However, a focus based on School Level plans should be established by the principal to provide a base for teachers to work from. Perhaps visitations to schools that have faced or are facing similar concerns by team leaders that you have established would be beneficial again saving on specific funding.

As always, it is essential to set focus and utilize personnel as advantageously as possible to effect change, learn from others, and have partnerships in the schools focused on and planning delineated.

Question 2

The principal should focus on the elements of cooperative learning and what strengths are in the district to help reach the goal of outstanding student cooperation through the Cooperative Learning program. The strengths of the cooperative learning plan are it has elements of research, professional development, grade level input and alternative assessment. Weaknesses appear to be that it will not necessarily be accomplished in one year. First a focus must be established (what cooperative learning model?). What specific workshops are needed? Staff personnel development must take precedent in first year. Do staff understand where the school is going, what is wanted, how to evaluate, and what subject areas are they focusing on? Is there a pilot? Evaluation?

The second goal or plan has strengths noted in the test preparation program, analysis of data, identification of needed supplemental materials and purchase of materials that are necessary and in-service components.

Weaknesses seem to be in the area of expectations—too much too soon. A two-year plan stressing needs and possible program options such as Reading Rescue, or Reading Recovery at first-grade level might be beneficial. Review data and discuss three-year longitudinal study—some significant areas need to be reviewed, such as % meeting standard as compared to three-year continuum. Review curriculum, utilize at least one in-service staff development

day to review where we need to place emphasis. Implement within the five-year plan the needs in reading and writing separate from mathematics except in the area of word problems. Review test data, make mini-plan for improvement. Need teacher input and ideas through grade level meetings.

To implement the school level plans it is necessary to include representation from the Board of Education, PTA, community and staff in the specific elements of the plans. Clean from the staff and other groups mentioned a mission statement of needs and actions that will give "teeth" to the activities mentioned in the plan.

The plan seems too broad and may require several years to complete successfully. Perhaps the first year of the cooperative learning plan should include a training and piloting component with evaluative criteria including student, faculty, parent, and community input. Check with local colleges, ERIC, other districts and national/state organizations regarding various cooperative learning strategies and programs. Determine the right focus and debate the merits of cooperative learning possibilities before attacking the problem.

Strategies for eliciting community support are

A. Meet with PTA, Educational Council, Board Members, Community Representatives.

1.) Discuss plans

a) Gather input

b) Discuss concerns/what is Cooperative Learning?

c) Explain current trends in education re: Cooperative learning

2.) Discuss benefits educationally/socially

B. Elicit cooperation and volunteers

1.) Parent volunteers to establish helpers for cooperative learning

2.) Discuss learning styles and alternative assessments and how they can help

C. Discuss Plan 2

1.) Reading helpers/writing group facilitators

D. Discuss test results

1.) Develop specific plans to supplement/improve and plans to help

E. Involve all members of community in planning

1.) Special effort made to elicit help from parents/people in new housing development

a) Mentor/home and peer (older to younger) helpers

2.) Senior citizen population—mentors/readers/volunteers

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Commentary: This adequate response uses only some of the important information presented in the case and provides an uneven response to the questions. While the response to Question 1 raises issues related to curriculum and instruction and professional development, these issues are discussed only in relationship to the changing demographics of the school, and issues such as the declining test scores and the effect of decreased student activities are not mentioned at all. The response to Question 2 is more detailed and specific, but it is not as convincing as responses scored a '3'. The evaluation of Goal 1 is thorough, detailing weaknesses and explaining the actions the principal should take, as is the plan to elicit community support. The evaluation of Goal 2, however, is somewhat limited. The primary focus is on test preparation and there is little attention to addressing instructional change. The proposed courses of action are rational and supported by an understanding of the standards involved.

Sample Response 4 (Score = 2)

The broader areas which will prove to be challenging to James Madison School include a rapid increase in enrollment of poorly prepared students who are impacting negatively on published test scores as well as other teaching strategies such as cooperative learning.

If the district would redistrict, this could be a solution as James Madison's scores reflect 14% fewer students meeting the test standard as opposed to an increase of 3% meeting the standard district wide. The negative impact is reflected in the other statistics as well. If redistricting is not an option, then additional resources (staffing and funding) must be made available.

The given school plan addresses the goal, but the time line is wrong and the impact of a single day of in-servicing will be weak. A "pilot" team of teachers has to be selected based on their enthusiasm and interest in cooperative learning. They should, at the very start of the school year—if not prior to it, become trained in cooperative learning so they can function as facilitators after the entire staff is trained in November. Support groups must be established and those who attend voluntarily must be compensated or acknowledged in some way. Purchasing books to support the effort is valuable, but not nearly as valuable as teachers sharing, supporting and demonstrating for each other. Providing released time for the grade level meeting would also be beneficial.

Testing materials and supplemental materials to support identified weaknesses is part of the solution to this problem, but will not in and of itself correct the problem. If the district will provide additional staff, then an increase of time on task in both reading and math should impact positively.

Also, the in-servicing in cooperative learning and the subsequent support meeting and grade level meeting should focus on providing cooperative strategies and plans which hold each member of the group accountable in reading and math. Good planning will challenge the better students, but stimulate and motivate the remedial students. So even without an increase in staff, a change in approach will train teachers in effective cooperative learning techniques and should be helpful. Additional time on reading and math through scheduling change may need to take place.

In both cases, Goal 1 and 2, the time line for implementation is moving too slowly. The greatest investment in time must take place in the beginning of the year so another year of declining scores doesn't become reality.

Community support may be engendered in a variety of ways, including positive and informative newsletters and information forums. A faculty who has received valuable support will be your best ally. Additionally, committees including community volunteers should be enlisted and sent to successful school districts where cooperative learning is working well.

Community members may also be asked to volunteer as tutors for basic skills students; even a school-wide buddy system could be implemented.

Certainly, the parents deserve an explanation of correctly implemented cooperative learning. A conference with teacher and principal should facilitate this.

Commentary: The response presents an adequate analysis that demonstrates awareness of most of the important issues, but the response is uneven in some areas. In answering Question 1, the response identifies but does not do much to explain the challenges presented by increased enrollment and "poorly prepared" students, as well as decreased test scores. Since the suggested solution of "redistricting" is outside of the principal's control, it is not a logical and reasonable course of action given the circumstances of the case. The evaluation of the school improvement plan is detailed and specifically identifies weaknesses such as problems with the timeline, the weaknesses of a one-day staff development offering, and limitations of test preparation. Discussion of the implementation, however, is weaker even though it discusses the benefits of teachers sharing and supporting each other. Overall, the response demonstrates a general understanding of the ISLLC Standards and applies them appropriately.

Sample Response 5 (Score = 1)

1. Under Goal 1, the principal should offer continued support throughout the year, not just in December. One does not just implement a goal so easily. In addition, the

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grading would be explained in October and November and reinforced through the year.

Goal 2 was a strong goal to be desired but I am not in agreement how the school was going to set out to achieve it. In their outline, the test was going to set the standards for curriculum and texts. I feel the curriculum needs to be designed, materials purchased to support curriculum and then give the assessment.

To implement the plan, books should be purchased on cooperative learning and assigned as reading on a volunteer basis. Information garnered would be shared with the entire staff. This would be an introduction to cooperative learning. The workshop would provide a hands-on experience where the professional developer would also be able to answer questions that developed from the reading experience. The follow-up grade level meeting would be helpful in encouraging each staff member to take the risk and be supported. It is also valuable to share experiences that didn't work to see if there is a better way of implementing the lesson.

The principal should approach Goal 2 differently than the outline presented by the previous principal. Without bad-mouthing the individual, I would stress the need to see if our curriculum and texts meet the core content standards first. I would then evaluate standardized tests to see which one would best reflect what we were looking for in a standardized test.

To elicit community support, parent education is needed in the area of cooperative learning. Some school functions that could be used would be family math or science night, PTA meetings and open house.

The school community is changing. From surveys taken in the community, there is a decline of student involvement in activities outside of the school. Therefore, our students are experiencing less exposure to activities that could broaden their life experiences. Consequently, the district evaluated its resources (including students) and feels a cooperative approach would complement the change that has taken place in the community. Research shows that children are more apt to garner more from each other rather than the top down effect of teacher to student.

The school improvement plan developed by the school staff is clear: Goal 1, To improve implementation of cooperative learning in all classrooms. Goal 2, To improve achievement levels of all students in core areas: reading, writing, mathematics.

Commentary: This response demonstrates some competence in analysis and using information from the case, but it is clearly

limited. The response to Question 1 merely summarizes some of the information from the case and goes no further than that to identify or describe the challenges faced by the school. While there is some analysis of the school improvement plan that offers an understanding of effective change processes, much of the response for Question 2 is also based on repetition and summary of the information contained within the case documents. Overall, the response does not analyze or synthesize important information from the case and is vague and skeletal in the analysis it does present.

Sample Response 6 (Score = 1)

Question 1

James Madison School is faced with an issue of diversity among its student population. The subsidized housing project that is new in the community has impacted in a significant way on the numbers of students now enrolled. Not only are there more students in every class but the students' home situations and socioeconomic backgrounds may be different than the students and teachers at James Madison have known.

Question 2

The School Improvement Plan is too little too late. Books and materials on cooperative learning should have been purchased in the spring of the year and made available to the staff before the close of the school year. In addition, the principal and/or the team leaders should have all had some training and begun introducing the use of those strategies in the spring.

The principal needs to very subtly develop a profile of his current student population by looking at the skill levels of the students who enrolled over the last year, and look specifically at the test data to determine the cluster of skills that most need to be addressed. This needs to be done and analyzed by August 1.

Next, the principal needs to be in contact with and request a meeting with the PTSA officers. He/She should enlist their help in getting the parents and all students out to the school for an Open House no later than the second week of school. The principal should carefully select test data with the officers in the August meeting and ask for at least three parent volunteers to serve on the School Improvement Committee.

Also during early August, the principal should send out an open letter of invitation to all staff members, inviting them to a meeting about Planning for the Improvement in James Madison School. In the letter it should be noted that continental breakfast will be provided; the meeting will begin at 8:30 and end by noon. After sending the letters,

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the principal should make a few telephone calls to key staff members and ask them to make some personal calls to draw people to come to this meeting. The principal should be prepared with materials in hand for the staff who attend the August meeting, as well as some video-taped excerpts from various sources such as ASCD, NAEP, Johns Hopkins University, etc.

The principal needs to strategize with representatives from key constituent groups to make the test score problem known; the purpose for planning to use cooperative learning; and the need for the student population to be actively involved in daily instruction in classes, study at home, and participate in extra curricular programs.

Commentary: While clearly limited, this response does demonstrate some competence in analyzing the case and using the information presented. The response to the first question draws on information from the case but does not specifically address the challenges facing the school as a result of the events that have occurred. In presenting diversity as an issue or problem, the response does not adhere to the spirit of the standards. In answering the second question, the response is critical of the current school improvement plan, but fails to clearly focus on the strengths and weaknesses in the plan. Even though the plan to elicit community support appears to be broad-based, the description of the actions the principal needs to take to implement the plan is fairly vague and mostly principal driven.

Sample Response 7 (Score = 0)

1. The broader issues facing the school include the possibility of building more classrooms to accommodate the growth, the favoritism that's been shown to some parents in the past, and the community's lack of support of the cooperative learning strategy for instruction.
2. The main weakness in the school improvement plan is that cooperative learning should not be utilized as a be-all end-all instructional strategy to correct all problems. The reason for this part of the improvement plan must be discovered before damage is done. To improve achievement levels of all students in all basic skills areas should always be a school goal and therefore it has little significance as a separate school improvement goal.

In order to implement the given school improvement goal, the principal should schedule classroom visitations to let the teachers know that he will monitor the use of cooperative learning as prescribed. The principal should also ask teachers to review the data available concerning the acquisition of basic skills acquisition and would tell

them that scores must be improved. It's important for classroom teachers to be confronted with these facts.

In order to elicit community support for the school improvement plan, the principal should write the traditional "Welcome Back" letter to all parents and students. In this letter, he should ask them for their support for the plan and tell them how important their views are to him.

Commentary: This response represents little understanding of the issues or standards applicable to the case and fails to address basic components of the prompt. While the response to Question 1 identifies community support as a challenge, there is no additional support or development to explain the response. The response to Question 2 is overly broad and vague. Portions of the response, such as the assumption that cooperative learning is being "utilized as a be-all and end-all instructional strategy," may indicate a fundamental misreading or misunderstanding of the stimulus materials. Other portions of the response are so generic that they could be applied to any school decision-making or change process.

Sample Response 8 (Score = 0)

1. Based on my understanding of learning and teaching, the broader challenges faced by the Cherry Springs School are:
 - a need for an analysis of test data
 - a possible need for accommodating student growth.
2. The strengths of the plan are:
 - providing teachers with a new strategy for teaching and learning
 - encouraging teachers to work cooperatively, and
 - appropriate focus on basic skills

The weaknesses of the plan are:

- not sufficient funding, and
- time has not been provided for teachers to work together

It's also important that the time line is spread from October to March. The evaluation process for Goal #1 may not be specific enough, unless that's the way teachers wanted it.

To implement the school improvement plan, the principal should:

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- form a committee to implement the plan,
- ask grade-level teams to discuss cooperative learning, and
- change report card to reflect grading by cooperative learning.

The principal should ask all teachers to include references to cooperative learning in their Back-to-School Night presentations. She should also ask the teacher liaison to the PTA to make a presentation to that group to explain why the parent's letter is inaccurate.

Commentary: This very skeletal response fails to provide support for the answers it has included. While it demonstrates understanding of the basic questions in the prompt and may apply some underlying analysis, the bulleted lists provide no support/rationale for the actions. The response includes little reference to the data and information in the case, and there is also not enough rationale to support that the actions are guided by knowledge of the standards.

Module III: Analysis of Information and Decision Making

The seven exercises in the Analysis of Information and Decision Making section are scored on a three-point scale, with 2 the highest possible score and 0 the lowest. The responses to the two questions associated with each document are treated as a single response for scoring purposes, so only one score is assigned to each document.

Sample Exercise

The table below presents enrollment data for students of different backgrounds in a high school of nearly 1,200 students. Look at the table carefully and answer the questions below.

Assume that the superintendent has informed you of a recently adopted Board goal to increase the academic achievement of all students.

1. What important patterns do you observe in the data? Identify and describe at least three.
2. As principal of the high school, what additional information would you want? How would you obtain this information?

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Western High School Selected Course Enrollment Data

	Male	Female	White	Asian	Black	Hispanic	Total
School	51.2%	48.8%	68.7%	14.8%	10.9%	5.6%	100.0%
Numbers	602	574	808	174	128	66	1,176
All Advanced Placement	60.3%	39.7%	42.5%	49.3%	6.8%	1.4%	6.2%
Numbers	44	29	51	36	5	1	73
Advanced Biology	42.1%	57.9%	55.3%	39.5%	3.9%	1.3%	6.5%
Numbers	32	44	42	30	3	1	76
Honors English I, II, III	25.7%	74.3%	52.5%	39.6%	6.9%	1.0%	8.6%
Numbers	26	75	53	40	7	1	101
Honors Algebra II	46.4%	53.6%	42.9%	57.1%	0.0%	0.0%	2.4%
Numbers	13	15	12	16	0	0	28
Honors Geometry	40.8%	59.2%	55.1%	40.8%	4.1%	0.0%	4.2%
Numbers	20	29	27	20	2	0	49
Chemistry	48.6%	51.4%	64.8%	25.7%	6.7%	2.9%	8.9%
Numbers	51	54	68	27	7	3	105
Probability and Statistics	71.4%	28.6%	50.0%	50.0%	0.0%	0.0%	1.2%
Numbers	10	4	7	7	0	0	14
Basic Math I and II	47.2%	52.8%	5.0%	1.5%	60.3%	33.2%	16.4%
Numbers	94	105	10	3	120	66	199
Basic English I and II	63.1%	36.9%	65.6%	8.1%	18.1%	8.1%	13.6%
Numbers	101	59	105	13	29	13	160

Relevant ISLLC Standards

Standards 1 and 2

General Scoring Guide

The following general scoring guide is used to score all responses in the Analysis of Information and Decision Making Module:

Score: 2

A score of 2 presents a well-developed analysis or interpretation of the document based on a clear understanding and application of the underlying standards.

A typical response in this category

- demonstrates a clear understanding of the standards applicable to the document and its interpretation or analysis
- applies the appropriate standards in a manner that is consistent with the intent and spirit of the standards
- clearly identifies and analyzes the relevant information, concepts, and/or issues presented in the document
- provides clear and specific answers to both questions and supports the answers with specific examples from the documents
- provides a logical and reasonable rationale for answers when requested

School Leaders Licensure Assessment (1010)

Score: 1

A score of 1 presents an analysis or interpretation of the document based on a general understanding and application of the underlying standards, but may also be uneven in its presentation.

A typical response in this category

- demonstrates a general understanding of the standards applicable to the document and its interpretation or analysis
- applies the standards in a manner that is supportive of the intent and spirit of the standards
- generally identifies and analyzes the important information, concepts, and/or issues presented in the document
- provides a general or uneven answer to one or both questions and/or provides general support with examples from the documents
- provides an acceptable rationale for answers when requested

Score: 0

A score of 0 may demonstrate some competence in interpreting or analyzing the document, but is clearly limited or flawed.

A typical response in this category

- demonstrates a weak understanding of the standards applicable to the document and its interpretation or analysis
- does not apply appropriate standards or applies standards in opposition to the intent and spirit of the standards
- overlooks important relevant information in the document and/or seriously misinterprets or misunderstands the information, concepts, and/or issues presented in the document
- provides a vague, inappropriate, or illogical answer to the question or fails to provide any support for the answer provided
- provides an inappropriate or illogical rationale or does not provide a rationale when one is requested

Sample Responses

The following are examples of actual responses transcribed with errors given by principal candidates to the sample exercise from Analysis of Information and Decision Making. The score assigned to each is written above the response. An italicized explanation of how the score was derived is included below the response. Two examples are provided at each score point.

Sample Response 1 (Score = 2)

Important Patterns

- 10.9% Black population—however, 3.9% in Advanced Biology, 0.0% in Honors Algebra II, 0.0% in Probability and Statistics
- 60.3% of the Black population is in Basic Math I and II
- Hispanic population represents 5.6%, however 1.0% in Honors Eng I, II, III; 0.0% in Honors Alg II, 0.0% in Honors Geometry and Probability and Statistics.
- Asian population—has disproportionate large numbers of students enrolled in Advanced Honors courses—e.g., AP, Adv Biology, Honors Eng I, II, III, Honors Alg II, and Prob and Statistics.
- Males and Females—disproportionate percentage of males in all Advanced Placement (far more males); disproportionate percentage of females in Honors English I, II, III (far more females); disproportionate percentage of males in Probability and Statistics (far more males); disproportionate percentage of males in Basic English I and II (63.1% to 36.9%)

Additional Information Needed

- No mention is made of grades. I would have this information generated by the Guidance Department. Both from students enrolled in Honors and regular courses
- I would need information and standardized test scores—again either the Guidance Department or the Central Office Administration would have that information.
- % of students entering 4- year/2- year colleges—school profile/ "report card"
- I would need information about how students are placed in classes to find out why disproportionate enrollments exist. I would get this from Guidance Counselors and/or Department heads.

School Leaders Licensure Assessment (1010)

Commentary: This response presents a well-developed analysis of the document that contains clear and specific answers to the questions asked. It identifies and describes at least three important patterns in the data that relate to disproportionate representation of ethnic and gender identified students in the basic skills and advanced classes. The response also clearly identifies and explains how the principal would obtain other appropriate information to further investigate or analyze the situation.

Sample Response 2 (Score = 2)

Question 1

- The number of Black and Hispanic students is very low in A.P. classes.
- The numbers of Black and Hispanic students in high level mathematics classes are low or non-existent.
- The numbers of Black and Hispanic students are disproportionately high in Basic Math I and II and in Basic English I and II.
- The percentages of Asian students in AP, Honors, and high level classes in all subject areas appear disproportionately high.
- The numbers of males and females in all advanced placement, in all Honors English, and (most obvious) in Probability and Statistics, and in Basic English I and II are disproportionate.

Question 2

I would like a 3-year breakdown of this same data and I would request it for the 2 years preceding the current school year. I would like a breakdown of male-female enrollment within the Black and Hispanic overall figures. I would plan to meet with the department chairpersons/supervisors of English, math, science, and guidance departments to get their input as to the reasons for the disparity in the White v. Black and Hispanic enrollments in classes that are more challenging, and as to the reasons for the male-female imbalances. The actual numerical data could be gathered from the school data base assuming that historical data is maintained on course enrollment.

Commentary: This response interprets the information in the document by identifying the disproportionate representation of ethnic minority and male/female students, with particular attention to advanced courses and basic skills courses in specific subject areas. It also clearly identifies additional information that should be requested along with the sources that would be contacted to get

this information. This response particularly highlights the equity issues that demonstrate an integration of the standards in making decisions.

Sample Response 3 (Score = 1)

Overall, a major pattern I see is a big imbalance in the numbers of Black students enrolled in advanced placement, Advanced Biology, Honors Algebra and Probability and Statistics (no students in either class!), and a huge imbalance in the numbers of Black students enrolled in Basic Math I and II. The Black students are 10.9% of the student body, but 60.3% of the students in Basic Math are Black.

I would want to know what is being done to improve and challenge students to strengthen their skills to leave low-level courses. Is it ability or lack of effort? I would speak with the staff to devise a plan to develop skills of "low level" students to take advantage of higher level courses. I would speak with students to see if they are aware of what is available to them. Why are they not taking advantage of the situation?

Commentary: While this response does provide analysis of the documents, it overlooks important information in the document and does not fully respond to the question. It focuses on only two closely related patterns of disproportionate representation of students, both dealing with just one of the three ethnic minority groups listed in the data. The response includes questions the principal would ask staff and students to gain additional information, but does not indicate a sense of other documents, policies, or practices that could have an effect in this area.

Sample Response 4 (Score = 1)

One big problem I see is the imbalance in males and females in many of the classes. The male-female ratio in the school as a whole is close to 50-50, but in advanced placement classes, in Honors English classes, in Probability and Statistics, and in Basic English the ratios are far from 50-50. I would want to know how students are placed in these classes, and would want to know if the instruction in these classes is geared more toward one sex than the other. I would get this information from teachers, counselors and especially from students.

Commentary: In focusing on only one pattern of disproportionate representation, the male-female imbalances, this response does not fully respond to the question and does not fully identify or analyze the important information in the document. The response does identify some additional information the principal could obtain from teachers, counselors, and students, but the information is fairly general and limited in scope.

School Leaders Licensure Assessment (1010)

Sample Response 5 (Score = 0)

Important information:

1. Advanced Placement: 60.3% Males, 39.7% females
2. Advanced Biology: 55.3% White, 30.5% Asian, 3.9% Black, 1.3% Hispanic
3. Basic Math I and II: 47.2% males and 52.8% females
4. Basic English I and II: 65.6% White, 8.1% Asian, 18.1% Black, 8.1% Hispanic

As principal of the high school, I want to know more information about this situation. I would want to know percentages of students and how they are doing in all classes.

Commentary: While this response pulls information from the document that could illustrate the existence of patterns, it does not interpret or analyze the data in the document and is clearly limited. The request for additional information is both vague and generic and does not provide an indication that there is an understanding of the important issues in the situation.

Sample Response 6 (Score = 0)

This kind of situation happens in far too many schools in America. There are too many students who are not receiving the education they deserve. The problem is most severe for minorities, who often are cheated out of the education they deserve. This is usually the result of unfair grading, testing, placement practices and prejudices on the part of teachers. This example shows how bad the problem can be.

Commentary: This response, while commenting on the nature of the problem presented by the data, does not address either of the questions asked. Given the questions asked, the response is inappropriate and is considered clearly limited.

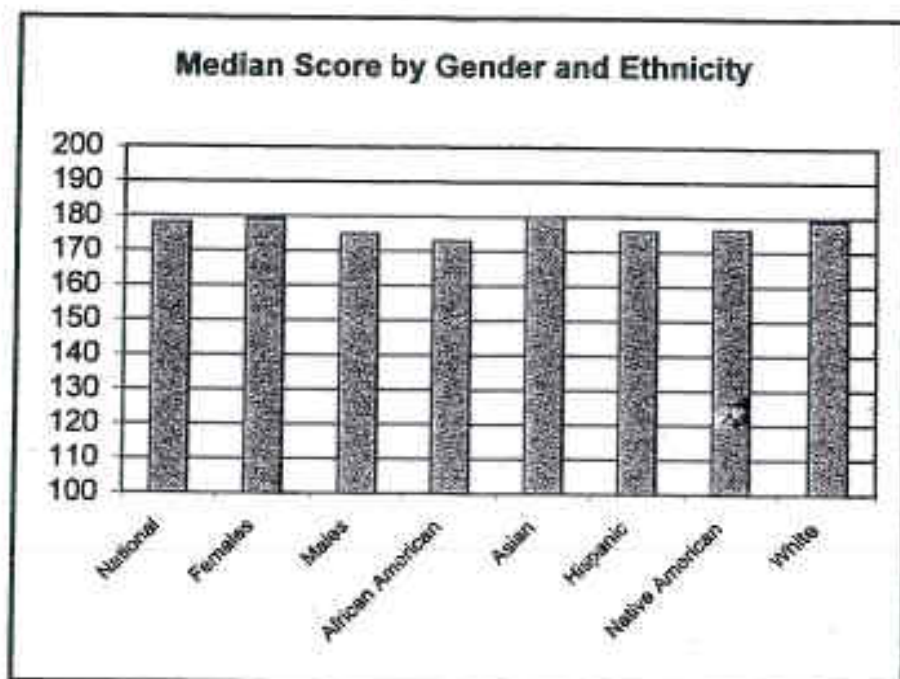
Test Information - 2005-2006 Total Examinees

September 1, 2005-August 1, 2006

TEST CODE	1010	TEST NAME	School Leaders Licensure Assessment
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COUNTS	GENDER		ETHNICITY				
Total	Females	Males	African American	Asian	Hispanic	Native American	White
7,418	4,449	2,708	1,045	64	234	40	4,067

MEDIAN SCORE	
National	178
Females	179
Males	175
African American	173
Asian	180
Hispanic	176
Native American	176.5
White	179



Scores in Effect as of 1/1/07	
STATE	PASSING SCORE
California	173
Louisiana	168
Maine	168
Missouri	167
Indiana	165
Kansas	165
Kentucky	165
Virginia	165
Connecticut	161
District of Columbia	160
Arkansas	158
Maryland	157
Tennessee	156
North Carolina	155
Mississippi	154
Georgia	150
New Jersey	148

NOTES:

State passing scores listed in the table do not include states that use multiple passing scores, multiple test composite scores or states that have no minimum passing score.

A state and score listed in *italics* indicates a score used for Highly Qualified Status Only.